



Friends of White's Woods

Mr. Larry Garner, Manager
White Township Supervisors
950 Indian Springs Road
Indiana, PA 15701

Indiana, Pa. 15701

September 5, 1995

Dear Mr. Garner,

Thank you for requesting our comments and suggestions regarding the Chambers Vukich Master Plan. We applaud your efforts to increase the usage of White's Woods, however, it is the opinion of the membership, that this new plan is not compatible with the White's Woods survey findings reported in July by the Commissioners. To summarize the Township's own report on voter's responses, 40% of those voters stated a clear preference for either no change to the existing setting, or, if there are changes that they be minimal; 13% stated a preference for basic facilities; 40% wanted "passive recreational activities that are compatible with the wooded, natural setting of White's Woods." Thus, 93% of the voters who responded wanted White's Woods to remain largely unchanged which is clearly quite different from constructing a lengthy road right into the heart of the woods.

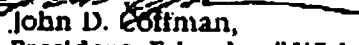
Not only is the Chambers Vukich plan counter to what the voter's indicated they want, but their plan is ambitious and would require a large amount of funding for both construction and maintenance. Further, if the plan is implemented, it would fragment the entire forest (the White's Woods Nature Center and IUP Co-op property) to the detriment of wildlife,--for example, breeding of warblers, vireos, scarlet tanagers. We feel that the plan reflects Chambers Vukich's goal as landscape architects, rather than the clearly stated desires of the township's voters. We agree with the survey results and believe the highest use of White's Woods is as a viable, natural ecosystem. We note that the planners have changed the name to White Wood's Park. It seems that voters have indicated they do not want another landscaped "park," but instead have indicated an overwhelming desire for a passive, natural landscape.

Regarding the overall plan, we believe that any development needs to be confined to the already developed periphery. The plan for enhancement on 12th street looks reasonable so far. If further development must occur, we suggest that it be limited to the access area directly adjacent to Fulton Run Road. A small parking area and restroom near the road would provide a jumping off point for exploration of the woods. Please remember that the survey respondents who wanted more grandiose action, stated their needs under "general recreational needs in White Township, not specifically to White's Woods."

Our opinion is that the plan should be returned to Chambers Vukich with a request that they modify their proposal so that it follows White Township voters wishes. The plan should not be accepted as currently presented, and we would be happy to assist Chamber Vukich in developing a more suitable plan. We look forward to discussing this with you at the next meeting of the township supervisors. Attached for your further information, on the next page, are some representative further comments and suggestions from our membership in response to the plan.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,


John D. Coffman,
President, Friends of White's Woods